News Releases
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Newfoundland Labrador

Education
Tourism, Culture and Recreation
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Newfoundland and Labrador Culture Takes Centre Stage

In schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, students in Grades 4-9 are gearing up to showcase their projects in the annual Historica Heritage Fairs. Every year, students research some aspect of the province's culture or history, and present their projects at school and regional fairs. The Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education, attended the fair at Our Lady of Mercy Elementary in St. George's today.

"The projects were as diverse as our culture and heritage, and I was truly impressed with the talented work I saw at the school. I commend all the students for their hard work and creativity," said Minister Burke. "In fact, teachers, parents and volunteers at schools all over the province are to be commended for their dedication to the fairs which help our young people learn so much about our heritage and culture."

Newfoundland and Labrador culture, history and heritage have seen a revival in schools in recent years under the Williams Government's $10 million *Cultural Connections* strategy. A key goal of the initiative is to increase the presence of cultural content in the school curriculum, and foster links between artists and students in the school environment.

The Honourable Clyde Jackman, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Recreation, noted that the Provincial Government is entering into the third year of a $17.6 million commitment to a long-term cultural strategy, *Creative Newfoundland and Labrador: The Blueprint for Development and Investment in Culture*, which identifies cultural education as a strategic direction.

"Projects such as Historica Heritage Fairs help students develop a critical appreciation of the significant roles that both tangible and intangible heritage play in our society," Minister Jackman said. "Cultural education is included in our government's comprehensive cultural strategy to increase and enhance arts heritage education within the Newfoundland and Labrador school system, strengthening students' sense of place and identity, as well as their overall confidence."

Examples of an enhanced classroom experience as a result of *Cultural Connections* can be witnessed on any given day in schools throughout the province. A new music program has been implemented in Kindergarten to Grade 6, supported by additional resources and an initiative to repair or replace music equipment.

A new art program, which encompasses sketching, painting, working with colours and exposure to works of art is being implemented in Kindergarten to Grade 9 and was introduced in September 2007 in Kindergarten and Grade 1.

Materials and exhibits from The Rooms Provincial Museum, The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery and The Rooms Provincial Archives, captured in 18 Travelling Culture Kits, are regularly on tour to intermediate schools around the province. The kits include reproductions of artifacts from The Rooms' collections as well as lesson plans designed to complement the Grade 8 history curriculum.

Over 70 titles by Newfoundland and Labrador authors, or about Newfoundland and Labrador itself, as well as CDs and videos, have been provided to primary, elementary, intermediate and high schools. In addition, students and teachers can interact with the province's artists and performers one-on-one, through such programs as the Arts Work conferences, the Visiting Artist Program, and the School

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Touring Program.

"Through the *Cultural Connections* strategy and its many initiatives, music, art and culture are coming to life in our classrooms," said Minister Burke. "Every activity, such as the Historica Fairs and sessions with the Travelling Culture Kits, and every book or CD that our students are exposed to, gives them a better appreciation of our unique culture and of art and music in general."

Heritage fairs are sponsored nationally by Historica, a not-for-profit organization which **supports programs that increase awareness of, and interest in, Canadian heritage and culture.** Provincially, the program is run under the auspices of the Historic Sites Association, with support from the departments of Education, and Tourism, Culture and Recreation.

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